



Perspective: Environment, biodiversity, and the education of the physician of the future

Author(s): Gomez A, Balsari S, Nusbaum J, Heerboth A, Lemery J
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Abstract:

Ours is an age of unprecedented levels of environmental alteration and biodiversity loss. Beyond the exposure to environmental hazards, conditions such as environmental degradation, biotic impoverishment, climate change, and the loss of ecosystem services create important health threats by changing the ecology of many pathogens and increasing the incidence and/or severity of certain noncommunicable conditions. They also threaten health in the future by weakening the Earth's life support systems. Although physicians remain one of the most often accessed and most trusted sources of information about the environment, there is currently little emphasis on educating medical professionals about these environmental issues. This lack of training reduces the ability of most physicians to be efficient science-public interfaces and makes them ineffective at contributing to address the fundamental causes of environmental problems or participate in substantive environmental policy discussions. This is an important challenge facing medical education today. To turn medical students into effective physician-citizens, an already-overwhelmed medical school curriculum must make way for a thoughtful exploration of environmental stressors and their impacts on human health. The overarching question before medical educators is how to develop the competencies, standards, and curricula for this educational endeavor. To this end, the authors highlight some of the critical linkages between health and the environment and suggest a subset of key practical issues that need to be addressed in order to create environmental education standards for the physician of the future.

Source: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0b013e31827bfbef>

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Health Professional

Exposure :

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Ecosystem Changes

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Global or Unspecified

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

General Health Impact

Medical Community Engagement:

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Low Socioeconomic Status

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Review

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified